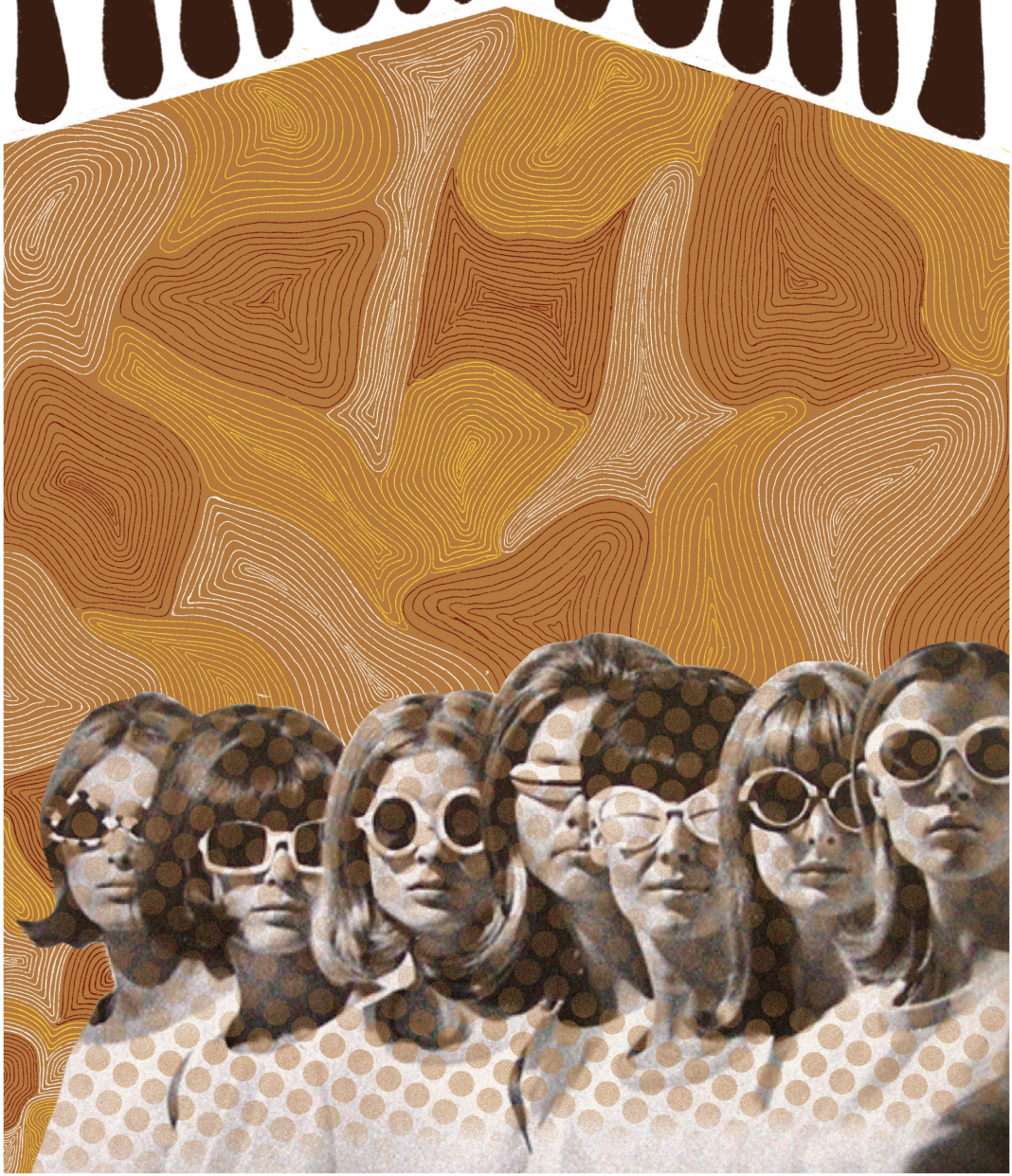
# PINCH 3 POINT



DREAM ON

# DEXTER LAHIFF

Dexter Lahiff's connection to music has never existed for the spectacle of the stage. Rather, it is about transposing experience into sound, with each song capturing the details of his life. And it's an approach that we see in some of the greatest songwriter's of our past.

"Lately, I've been listening to Guided By Voices. Elliot Smith's another favourite, and, of course, The Beatles."

Each of these names are so fitting to Dexter's work. Like Elliott Smith, Dexter leans into a state of intimacy that distills itself from performance, instead mirroring a comforting conversation. And like GBV, his work captures the best of what it means to be an unpolished performer — capturing the raw energy of a songwriter that values honesty over appeal. But this simplistic face doesn't mean that his songwriting is simple.

"I've always just started with a melody or a chord progression. But since releasing my EP, 'How I Really Feel', I've been reevaluating my music a lot more and am trying to be more intentional with what I write."

It is a shift experienced by many songwriters as they confront their instinct and search for a more deliberate message. While Dexter began piecing songs together without concern for their reception, his time in Adelaide's music community — both as an artist and student at the Con — has encouraged him to critically evaluate the work he's creating.

"When I started uni, it made me think about what others were doing," he admits. "Before, I would just happily put songs together. But now, having started performing and being around other artists, I do think about how they're be received—not in a way that changes my writing, but it's just made me more aware of what people are taking from them."

Entering a world of music, there is also an inherent need to be on a stage. However, extending beyond the performances of 'Blackbird' in his year 10 history class, to finding his own place on the stage has taken time.

"I had to learn [performance] over the last few years. It's a lot more enjoyable now that I know what I'm doing—especially after getting through my first bout of exciting work and starting to produce more."

While now finding more familiarity in front of an audience, Dexter still recognises that ‘to make’ and ‘to influence' exist in two separate realms. And while Dexter holds great admiration for artists who have had profound influences on his life, he has “never wanted to imitate someone else”.

“I’d rather just be myself.”

It is this refusal to conform that makes Dexter stand out within the scene. His sound feels natural to him, being honest to the artist he is in the moment — not the performer he may desire to become. And that is only further extended by his lyricism.

“My lyrics are pretty set in reality, I just try to make it not as obvious where they’re from. Most of it is just things that have happened to me, or me putting myself in someone else’s place.”

Through his vocals, Dexter acts not only as a songwriter, but a storyteller too, allowing each song to transpose his listeners into a new world when he’s on the stage. A world that Adelaide has welcomed with open arms.

“There’s a great sense of community here. Everybody is really supportive and wants to help each other out.”

And that community has extended beyond Dexter’s solo work. While he primarily writes and records on his own, he’s recently started a new band with his friends Angus, Logan, and Noah.

“Writing songs with Angus has been different, but it’s also been really enjoyable to work with someone. Now I get the band’s opinions on different parts of songs when we record, and it is good to have that outside perspective.”

While appearing as a very solitary artist, the extensive connection he has found with music through his family continues to echo through every release. Dexter’s love for music started early, growing up with a grandfather who played in country bands and a mother who was a musician as a child. And today, keeping that connection alive, Dexter has found a tradition through his album covers.

“My covers were actually illustrated by my Nan. I had all these ideas, but they just didn’t really fit my music. When I saw her work, it really resonated with me.”

As Dexter continues to evolve as an artist, his approach remains consistent. Working on new songs, both as as solo artist and with his band, Dexter Lahiff continues to build an intimate identity as he chases the stories that overflow his mind. Because, with such a natural drive for the art, inspiration is seemingly inescapable.

“Music is all I think about — probably to a neurotic level!”

# MEI

There's a certain precision that is carried through Mei's words. Whether living in a quiet moment of reflection, or being read aloud to a room of strangers, for them, poetry is more than just self-expression — it's about balancing connection with responsibility.

"As a spoken word poet, there's a responsibility in what you're sharing. You don't want it to just be the Notes app or therapy—you don't want to force the audience to be your therapist. You have to be responsible with what you're putting out into the world."

This value has shaped Mei's entire approach to poetry, with each word intentionally chosen to form a balance between personal experience and collective resonance.

But Mei didn't always see poetry as an avenue that they could claim as their own.

"I've always written. I have poems from when I was in year 7, scrawled in the margins of my books. But I never thought of poetry or writing as something that I could actually do myself."

That changed in 2021 when they found themselves falling into Adelaide's spoken word scene. And what started as a simply hobby, suddenly became something much deeper. "I used to be a science kid. I was like full physics and whatnot. But then I fell out of that and got caught up in the spoken-word scene, and that really drove me to keep going."

Mei's first open mic was around 2021. And by 2023, they had their first feature in *Folk 'n' Words* — a major shift from their previous experience that asked them to fully embrace the performative nature of spoken word. Because, unlike traditional poetry, spoken word exists within a different space — balancing literature and theatre between writing and breath.

"There's something natural about performing," Mei says. "But there's also that element of rehearsal. I've done competitive spoken word where there's a timer, and there's a great deal of preparation that goes into that. You have to do it off-memory and with constraints, which I find a bit ridiculous. Words shouldn't be bound by a time limit."

Still, beyond the competition, they don't shy away from performance itself.

"When I was young, I used to read Shakespeare plays aloud to myself. And I was a debate kid, so I've always enjoyed that kind of space. Even though I can sometimes be shy elsewhere, there's something about having everyone listening to you that's powerful. But it's also daunting, because you have all that attention, and you need to make sure you do the right thing with it.

While having various other literary avenues, Mei has always been naturally drawn to poetry.

“Poetry is more of the distillation of a specific feeling or moment, and there's a brevity to it that allows for a more instantaneous connection. And that’s part of why I love poetry — that sense of connection between you and whoever you're reading to.”

However, Mei doesn’t limit themself to words, extending their creativity to visual art and photography that allow them to capture a fleeting moment within a still image.

“Capturing moments is really important to me, especially in writing. And I think it’s the same in photography, which is why, when I do it, I like film. I’m not someone who’s out with a phone, taking photos all the time, because they’re so easily deleted. I want to be able to capture a raw moment that you can’t fix.”

Their art is tactile. “I love cross-stitch because it connects me to older women’s craft that would otherwise be forgotten,” they say. “That’s why I love stitching over old doilies—adding my own piece to something that someone else spent ages creating.”

And as Mei continues to work within each artistic field, they are also looking towards combining these worlds.

“I’ve got quite a few pieces of art that I’ve been putting with my poetry. So, I’m thinking of putting them together at one point, maybe as a zine or even an exhibition.”

For the months upcoming, Mei is looking to take a step away from the slam poetry world.

"Right now, I'm trying to take a step back from slam poetry brand, having spent a lot of the tale end of last year doing the state slam and the national slam. It's a bit tiring - I’m trying to go more free with my work.”

That shift has led them towards new collaborations. Most notably, combining their poetry with a band.

“I’ve been performing as a new band with Jack Green and Ned Baulderstone. It’s been really cool because they’re very jammy. They have the freedom to completely lack form, and I just have to figure my own self out over that. It’s been really freeing.”

Looking towards the future, Mei has no intention of limiting themselves to one path.

“I’d love to get published. But that’s also a matter of collecting enough poems to put together a book. And I’ve also considered doing a one-person show — something that brings poetry and performance together in a way that feels really fluid.”

For now, though, they’re embracing the freedom to create art without restriction—whether that is through words, with thread or film strips. And with each new project, Mei continues to share messages that speak to the heart of every listener.

# Silence and Sledgehammers

I've been waking to arms covered in smudged ink
frantic nocturnal notions of revolution
turn empty eulogy settled in my pores;
now I can't quite make out the words.

( Something about comfort...
something about conviction...
something... silence and
... sledgehammers )

I've been waking to a death toll in my inbox
(also known as a morning news bulletin
a mourning of numbers)

I've been coming up against the world like a wall
lingering on words like rosary beads.
All of it makes my faith turn in its grave.
I cannot say Amen, nor can I avert my eyes.

Bearing witness is a nauseating thing
stomach uncertain every inch
of that free fall
into hopelessness.

Hit the bottom of everything and resign myself
to the role of paralysed bystander
(also known as a poet)

What happened to last night's dreams
of revolution? To conviction?
Would I trade it for comfort?

Could I? Could I let my own silence
Tear through me like a sledgehammer?

Save my voice for shower renditions of billy bragg
and let my anger echo off the tiled walls
as I wash away those nocturnal notions?

Could I? Could I scrub those eulogies from my pores
and let the cycle repeat until all my bedsheets
are stained in me me *me* shaped ink smudges.

# CHRISTOPHER CORDEAUX

“Since the age of four, I always wanted to be an actor.”

Christopher Cordeaux speaks about his artistic desires with a true passion for the craft. He’s words undeniably stem from his love for the work, and you can’t help but feel that passion when you speak to him.

The last year has been a big one after four productions at Holden Street Theatres with Peter Gers.

"I started off with *Hamlet in Fifteen Minutes* for the Fringe last year, and instantly went into a Noel Coward play, *Cowdy Cowdy Cussy*. So two one-act handers back to back, which was brilliant. And then we did an Australian playwright, Patrick White, and his play was *Cheery Soul*. And now suddenly we've just come off the back of doing *Romeo and Juliet and Fifteen Minutes*."

Despite the predisposed ideas society has of actors, the theatrics and limelight that the stage brings can also instil a lot of anxiety.

"Fifteen minutes before you go on, you see the audience come down. Fuck, what's my first line?... You're completely blank. And then you're nervous, you're anxious, you're scared. And then it's your cue, and you go on and suddenly, that muscle memory kicks in, and it's like you're hypnotised. Everything just happens... You're on from absolute anxiety to absolute peace. Then, as soon as you do the bows and get off, it’s just full adrenaline."

Cordeaux has learned to sit with that feeling and become comfortable within discomfort. For him, performance is more than simply memorisation or technical skill. It’s a responsibility.

“When you're playing a character, you never know if anyone in the audience could have experienced or could relate to that character. So, as an actor, your job is to really allow them a sensibility of being seen and heard and relate to and not feel like they're being mocked.”

This construction of identity through words involves a much larger process as he works through script work, extensively reads within and outside his current work, and journals from the perspective of his characters. Having just finished his production of *Romeo and*

*Juliet,* Cordeaux now looks back upon his Romeo character journal — pages filled with monologue breakdowns, emotional images and resonant poems.

"This is a compilation of his thinking, poems, visual images... a thesaurus of emotion."

Characters aren't always easy to access. When Cordeaux was first cast as Romeo, the reactions were skeptical — too heartthrob, too polished. But he pushed back.

"You read the script and you understand the backstory of the character of torment or heartbreak... He's not actually a heartthrob, he's more of a tragic figure."

And so, to bring this presence onto the stage, Cordeaux subverts from stereotypes of teaching, breaking down anatomical structures to instead, borrow from the work of Meisner.

"You read the script and if there's a moment where something happens to the character and I've never had that before, I simplify it down to the emotion of how would he be feeling, thinking 'when have I felt that way?' And from there, I can write for my own personal experience."

After working in VFX post-production on Ron Howard's *13 Lives*, he's also got an eye for film.

"I prefer film work. I was always scared of doing stage, because when you're performing live, it's almost an opposite approach to screen work. The audience are the ones paying and hoping you won't make a mistake."

So, as Cordeaux continues to pursue his dreams, studying, rehearsing and performing, he's name is growing within Adelaide's acting scene, having more shows lined up for this year. Already cast is his role in

*Neighbourhood Watch* at St Jude's Theatre which comes to the stage this August.

"It's multiple characters... one with a Hungarian accent in World War II. I think that's going to be very interesting."

Living within the acting world has shown Cordeaux the true drive it takes. It's not glamorous. Not always fun. But for Cordeaux, it's necessary.

"Even though it's the same script, even though it's the same cast, no matter how many times you do it, ultimately it's almost a different performance every time, purely because of the audience."

And that's what keeps him going. That thrill of becoming someone imaginary, and making audiences feel something real.

# MARINA ANTHEA

For some musicians, their world seems to find them naturally. However, for others, they spend years floating between genre and style, with each providing a new piece of their musical identity that eventually collates to build their true home. This is the experience of Marina Anthea.

As a child, Marina studied classical cello, learning music under a disciplined framework that demanded constant precision and structure. But as she explored music, she found herself floating away from her classical studies to explore the worlds of jazz, theatre, and now, indie folk. And with all the lessons she's learnt along the way, Marina continues to value music as not simply technique, but a means of expressing her true self.

"I started as a classical cellist. I played for years, but by the time I got to university, it was just too much. I needed something different. I had always been fascinated by vocal technique, and that led me to singing. I figured, well, I've done classical, I've done theatre—what haven't I done? Jazz. So I took a chance on it, even though I knew nothing about jazz!"

Despite taking this daunting leap into the unknown, her time in jazz has opened her up to a world that feels more like home.

"The biggest difference between classical and jazz isn't just the music—it's the people, the culture. In classical, everything is about precision, about honouring what's already on the page. In jazz, you have to create music from nothing. It's pure feeling. It's communication. And that was mind-blowing for me."

Now, despite identifying herself as an indie folk artist, her past hasn't left her behind, finding ways to weave her past training to create something new.

"I've been experimenting with accompanying myself on cello, inspired by artists like Laufey. It's really challenging, but I love the way a non-conventional instrument can shape the way a song sounds. Writing on cello changes everything—it forces me to think differently, and the songs that come out of it feel completely unique."

Beyond her solo work, Marina also embraces chances to work in bands, being part of the indie folk pop band Close Friends, performing regularly in jazz duos, and even playing tuba in a German oom-pah band, *The Wachsfackels*.

"Tuba is such a weird instrument. No one wants to play it, but it also seems like everyone needs one. It's kind of my fun, ridiculous side project."

Still, with all of her side projects, Marina's heart still lies in songwriting.

"Being a songwriter is my dream.And I realised I just have to go for it while I'm young. I don't want to wake up at fifty and think, "Man, I never gave it a shot." Even if it means spending ten grand on recording, I'm doing it right, and I'm doing it now."

Falling into the natural styles of folk, Marina's lyrics are deeply personal, yet still offer a narrative that allows individual experiences to become something universal.

"That's why I love pop and indie folk. It's about storytelling, but in a way that people can see themselves in it."

And her process for creating these lyrics allows her to search for poignancy among the scrawling notes of her personal thoughts.

"I have a running notes app where I jot down anything—something I hear, something I see, even just a sentence that strikes me. Then I also keep a journal, and I've been trying to pull more lyrics from that because when you write in a journal, you're writing the truest version of yourself. It's raw, and that makes for better songs."

And when it comes to building her songs, Marina likes to create an raucous sound before finding that refined tune.

"For me, I generally bring it all together at once—the melody, the chords, the lyrics. It's a little chaotic, but it's what works for me."

Despite Marina's youthful training as a classical musician, and continual study through school and university, stepping onto the stage with an artistic identity that felt most true to herself exposed her to a new sense of vulnerability.

"I remember when I debuted my music to the Adelaide scene as a solo artist, it was such a weird yet really emotional feeling. I just couldn't really believe that I was sharing that story. And I knew that parts of the lyrics did hide the details, but to me, it was all, blatantly there for people to hear."

Even while feeling closer to her home, Marina's music style is consistently evolving.

"I think Adele is a massive musical influence. I listened to her when I was really young, and I think she has unknowingly had quite a big impact on on my writing, even though I don't listen to her anymore. And some other of my favourite artists are Cavetown and Lizzy Mcalpine; I've been really into Fiona Apple lately; and Billie Eilish, who people have told me that I remind them of."

Having external pressures to “be a doctor”, jumping into a field that “was never considered a serious career” caused many personal conflicts for Marina.

“I spent so long trying to do both, starting an Advanced Psychology degree alongside my jazz studies. But I finally realised that if I didn’t give music everything, then I’d have not shot of doing anything with it.”

And, despite the boldness of this choice, it is one that has only brought positive things to Marina.

“The moment I committed fully to music, my whole mindset changed. Before, I was only giving half of myself to everything. Now, I’m in it. I’m giving myself the time—five, six, ten years—to see where this goes. Because what’s the point of life if you don’t try for the thing that makes you happy?”

With this serious attitude, Marina has been taking herself to the recording studio, with her first single set to be realised this May. And from there, she has no plans of slowing down, releasing three more singles before an EP, estimated for September, and aiming to complete her second EP in early 2026 before beginning an interstate tour.

“I love Adelaide, but I know I probably won’t be able to stay here forever. The scene is small, and while that’s a beautiful thing—it means everyone knows and supports each other—it also means you eventually have to leave to grow. So, unfortunately, I’ve accepted that Melbourne is probably where I’ll end up.”

Still, she’s grateful for where she started. “Adelaide has produced some of the best musicians I know. They just all leave eventually. But there’s something special about growing up in a small scene. You build real connections here, and that’s something I’ll always carry with me.”

So, as we brace ourselves to hear the sounds of Marina Anthea in the coming months and years, we can be certain that everything she makes is entirely, and unmistakably, her own.

# Record Store Junkie

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